

Continuity of Care Advisory Panel
Social Workgroup Minutes
October 10, 2013

Meeting held at the Office of Forensic Services (DHMH)
10:00 – 12:00

I. Attendees

- a. Clarissa Netter (Co-Chair)
- b. Kait Roe (Fuse Health Services)
- c. Nevitt Steele, Esq.
- d. Lois Fisher, Esq. (Office of Public Defender)
- e. Stacy Reid-Swain, Esq. (DHMH)
- f. Darrell Nearon, PhD, JD (DHMH)
- g. Rianna Brown (DHMH)

Presenters:

Russ Springham (MHA)
Marian Bland (MHA)
John Brennan (Maryland Department of Disabilities)

The individual attendees introduced themselves and their respective organizational affiliations. The presentation today addressed barriers in housing that may contribute to a disruption in the continuity of care for individuals.

Russ Springham and Marian Bland presented the challenges and successes of housing to special populations. They began by reporting that flexibility and affordability are potential dilemmas in housing. Challenges in housing included

- The limited affordable housing stock;
- Complying with the Olmstead decision and, the conflict with judicial philosophy pertaining to aftercare planning and, complying with Olmstead mandates;
- Serious forensic history of individuals-sex offenses;
- Federal restrictions from the HUD;
- The SSI rate is \$710.00. In Baltimore the fair market rate for housing is \$1001.00. Without subsidies a person cannot afford housing;
- Previous unpaid utility bills, and
- Transportation can be a barrier for someone with a disability. It was mentioned that in some rural communities, “Friends of Families” can be paid to transport a consumer to appointments.

Handouts were provided to the attendees. A discussion of housing resources within the Mental Hygiene Administration was provided. Crisis beds are a resource. These beds are designed to be short term (10 days) and, to assist individuals remain in the community without being re-hospitalized. It was noted that these beds are not in all jurisdictions.

The workgroup members discussed the need to have flexible housing vouchers and housing to at risk populations. Homelessness was listed as a risk factor. The workgroup discussed how to utilize the presented information and make recommendations to decrease barriers to housing that impact one's continuity of care.

John Brennan presented housing for persons with disabilities in Maryland. There is a partnership with the Weinberg foundation. A pilot program was established to assist persons afford housing units by offsetting capital costs. Hudson Town homes were the first development under this program. There are discussions to try to market this type of program and partner with other property management companies. It was reported that educating case managers on the needs of individuals transitioning into housing should occur.

Stigma was identified as a significant barrier to persons attempting to obtain housing if they are diagnosed with mental illness and/or substance abuse. The presenter requested that the workgroup consider identifying how to overcome the stigma. It was suggested that this could be a recommendation that is presented to the continuity of care Advisory Group.

The presentation included discussion on the Olmstead decision and initiatives emanating from the decision. Workgroup members discussed how the initiatives can reduce barriers to housing as well as supporting options for consumers to include flexibility and patient choice for housing.

The alcohol tax and the connection to housing were presented. The presentation concluded with a discussion on Section 8 and 811. The workgroup discussed how safety becomes an issue when using housing vouchers. It was reported that housing vouchers tend to be accepted in neighborhoods that are not "safe". There was discussion this is discriminatory and further promotes stigma. In addition, the waiting time for a portable voucher was reported to be seven (7) years. A recommendation was advanced that there be state subsidies as well as federal subsidies for housing.

With no further discussion the chairs adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM.

The next scheduled meeting for the Social Workgroup is **October 15th, 2013- 11:00 to 1:00 at the Office of Forensic Services.**

Prepared by

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